# Larimer County Regional Plans Inventory

Student: Noah Niemeyer, Colorado State University

## PROJECT SUMMARY

In 2024, Larimer County hired Noah Niemeyer as the Climate Smart Future Ready Intern while he was studying Forest and Rangeland Stewardship at Colorado State University. Through the course of his internship, he created a Regional Plan Inventory dashboard, which now serves as a critical tool for research and collaboration across multiple policy topics.

The Regional Plan Inventory synthesizes and connects over 50 local plans and policies into one easy-to-use platform. This tool helps local stakeholders and decision-makers quickly find connections, gaps, and inconsistencies across different plans.

It covers important topics like transportation, housing, climate, water, food systems, natural areas, waste, hazards and land use, all linked to the Climate Smart Future Ready initiative. The goal of the inventory is to make it easier for planners to work together and create stronger, more coordinated policies and plans for the future, and it is currently being used to further other Larimer County projects.

## BACKGROUND

Larimer County established the Climate Smart Future Ready (CSFR) initiative to proactively confront the challenges posed by deteriorating air quality, escalating temperatures, prolonged droughts, and natural disasters in our community. Community feedback emphasized the importance of collaborative efforts to bolster existing initiatives and address the socioeconomic repercussions of climate change equitably. While climate change exacerbates these hazards, the concerted action outlined in the CSFR plan offers avenues to mitigate and adapt.

A key initial action item from the CSFR plan was to:

> *Conduct a policy and existing plan review and partner regionally to connect CSFR actions, especially those creating opportunities for all and in alignment or exceeding state plans and partner actions. Maintain and keep current an existing regional plan inventory that establishes synergies between partner programs and CSFR actions.*

Noah Niemeyer was hired to bring the vision for a regional plan inventory to life, a daunting task without a clear guidebook. Noah had the initiative, skills and persistence to reach out to

planners across the county, create a centralized and comprehensive list of adopted plans, and review each plan for policies that align with various topics and categories. Noah asked thoughtful and critical questions about representing information in clear and concise ways while being sure that information, from these more than 50 local plans, was represented without modification or interpretation, therefore building trust with our partners.

He then constructed a dashboard using Tableau software that allows users to sort, filter, and cross-reference data across numerous dimensions, including by:

- Key topics
- CSFR strategies
- Jurisdiction
- Individual plans

This dashboard provides a detailed overview of strategies being implemented to respond to climate change throughout Larimer County as defined by each jurisdiction's community plan. A wide variety of jurisdictions are incorporated including county, city, regional, conservation organization, educational institution, and state agency plans. The inventory establishes a baseline regarding climate action occurring in Larimer County to inform future collaboration and policy change. The highly interactive and graphical presentation of the information makes it easy to digest and compare information, and the tool can be easily updated over time.

## PROJECT IMPACT

The Regional Plan Inventory is a project with long-term relevance and importance for Larimer County. Since the creation of the Regional Plan Inventory, the tool has been used in several impactful ways:

- **Hazard Mitigation Plan:** In 2026, Larimer County updated our Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan. The Regional Plan Inventory has helped identify overlaps and disconnects between existing plans, which improves our ability to address hazards and risks across departments, agencies, and jurisdictions.
- **Plan Integration for Resilience Scorecard™ (PIRS™) Project:** In a partnership with the Texas A&M University Hazard Reduction & Recovery Center, Larimer County is using the PIRS methodology to “spatially evaluate networks of plans to reduce hazard vulnerability.” Coordinated land use planning can significantly increase a community’s resilience to natural hazards and disasters, and this project will assess opportunities to better connect plans. The Regional Plan Inventory that Noah built serves as the foundation and starting point for this analysis.
- **Climate Smart Future Ready Action Teams**: This tool has been a helpful resource for multiple Climate Smart teams that are championing actions related to: Built Environment, Circular Economy, , Business & Jobs, Natural Environment, Agriculture, Mobility, and Unifying Solutions.

In addition to the use of this Regional Plans Inventory, Larimer County has found such value in Noah's ability to hear a challenge, digest the complexities, and identify a path forward that he was hired for a second internship with Larimer County to analyze and recommend Land Use Code amendments to advance wildfire resiliency efforts.

## SATISFACTION OF AWARD CRITERIA

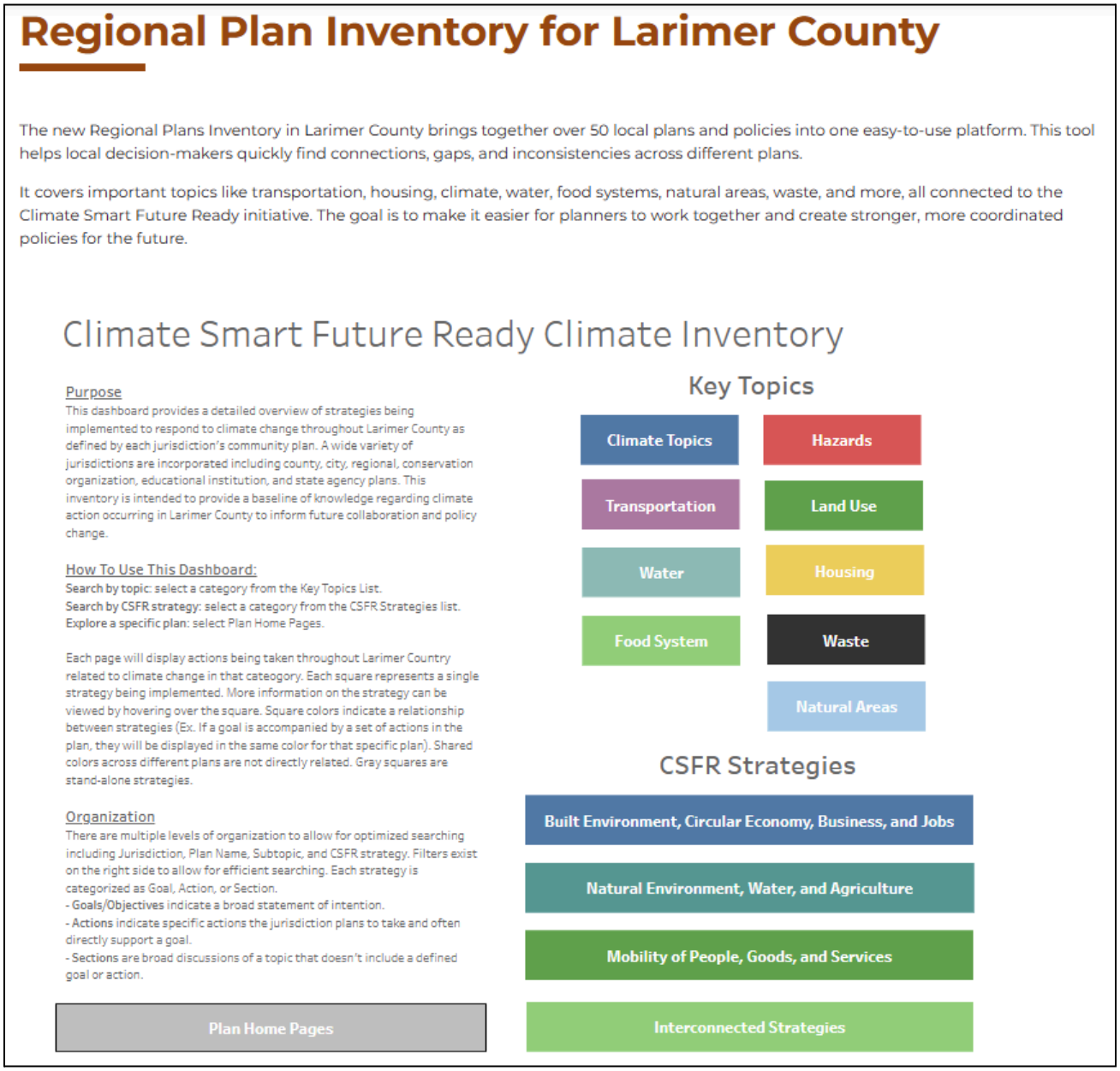
Noah Niemeyer worked as an intern for Larimer County from September 2024 to December 2024 (fall semester), while he was enrolled at Colorado State University. Noah successfully graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in Forest and Rangeland Stewardship, with a concentration in Rangeland Conservation and Management and a minor in Applied Environmental Policy Analysis in May 2026.

Criteria we imagine would be key to demonstrating the award winning quality of this project and Noah's effort include:

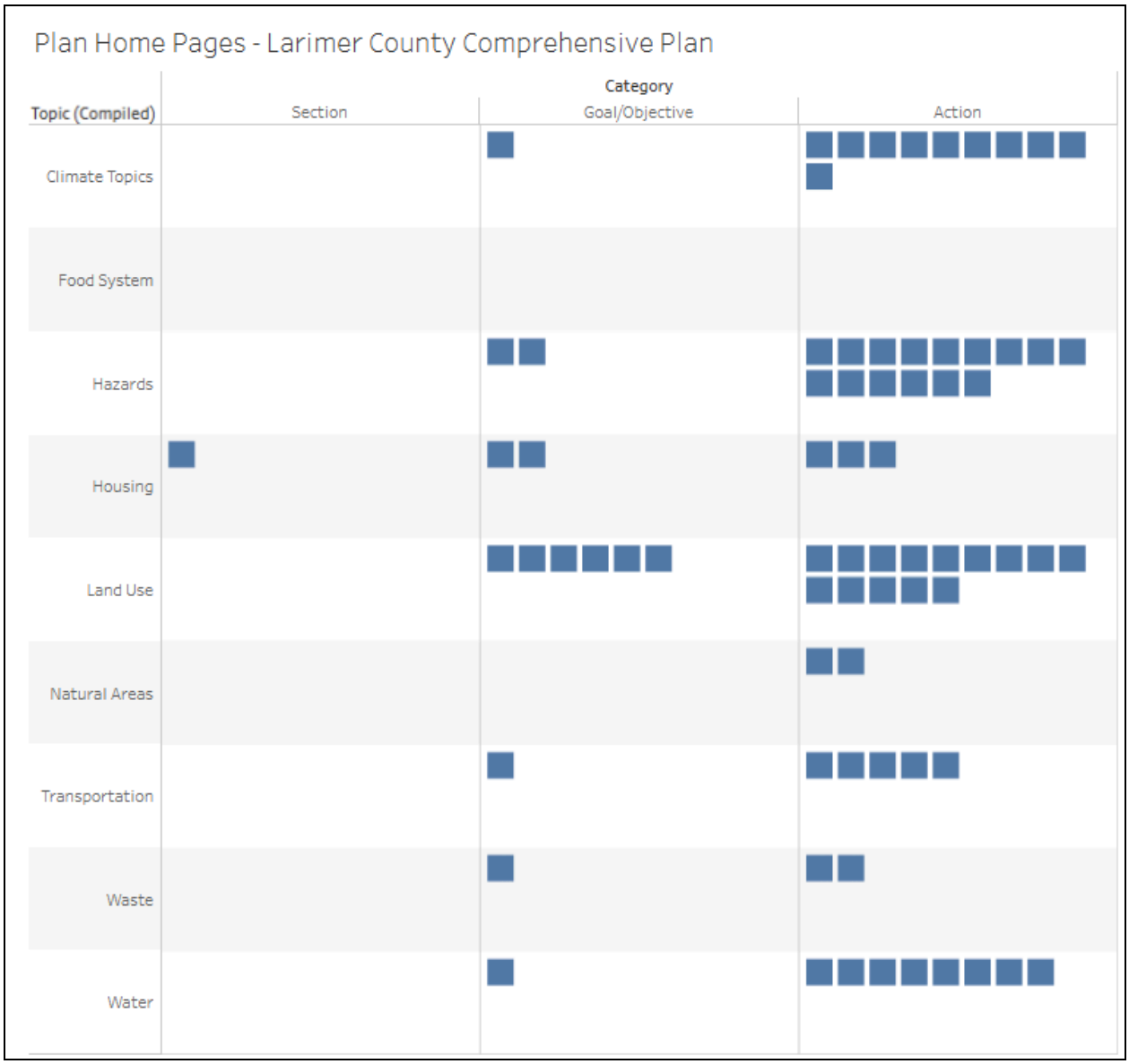
- **Project Design, Research & Analysis:** Developed and carried out a research and data analysis process for conducting a comprehensive review of 50+ community plans, many of which were hundreds of pages long.
- **Innovative Problem-Solving and Implementation:** Developing a coding tool that streamlined data analysis and created an accessible, interactive Tableau dashboard.
- **Professional Communication:** Engaging with subject matter experts to refine the scope of work and presenting findings to the CSFR land use action team—composed of County department heads and managers—with such enthusiasm and clarity that several team members inquired about his future availability. It is not always easy to communicate between urban and rural focused professionals, but Noah completed this task with the ease and understanding of how policy and plans impact future projects.
- **Insightful Reporting:** Delivering a thoughtful evaluation report that highlighted gaps and opportunities for more interconnected planning, with a strong focus on environmental and sustainability issues.

DIGITAL IMAGES

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**CAPTION**: Regional Plan Inventory landing page and instructions.




**CAPTION**: Example of a plan home page, with categorization of relevant goals, objectives, policies, and action items by topic. Hovering over each box provides more detail, including the verbatim policy language from the plan.




**CAPTION**: Example of a “topic” page, with relevant goals and policies organized by jurisdiction, adopted plan, and sub-topic. Selection boxes easily filter the information by sub-topic and jurisdiction. Hovering over each box provides more detail, including the verbatim policy language from the plan.

| | |
|---|---|
| Category (Water): | Action |
| Jurisdiction (Water): | Fort Collins |
| Plan Name (Water): | Fort Collins Comprehensive Plan |
| Sub-Topic (Water): | Development |
| Plan Text (Water): | Policy ENV 6.4 - DEVELOPMENT ALONG WATERWAYS Use development regulations, such as setbacks from natural features and performance standards, to conserve and protect natural resources along the Poudre River, Spring Creek, Fossil Creek, Boxelder Creek and other waterways. Redevelopment in areas with natural resource values or potential natural values will consider the creation or enhancement of those values with an emphasis on natural attributes |

**CAPTION**: Example of a call-out box with detailed information on each goal, objective, policy, or action that was included in the inventory.

## SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

- Regional Plan Inventory Webpage: https://www.larimer.gov/sustainability/climate-smart-future-ready/regional-plan-inventory

- Climate Smart Future Ready Plan: https://www.larimer.gov/sites/default/files/uploads/2024/lariemer_county_pamphlet_022124_-_digital_pages.pdf

- Letters of support (see attached) from:
    1. Heidi Pruess, CEP - Manager, Larimer County Office of Sustainability and Climate
    2. Josh Roberts - Mitigation Coordinator, Larimer County Office of Emergency Management
    3. Dr. Kristin Olofsson - Assistant Professor of Environmental Policy, Department of Political Science, Colorado State University

LARIMER COUNTY | OFFICE OF SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE

P.O. Box 1190, Fort Collins, Colorado 80522-1190, 970.498.7010, Larimer.gov

May 5, 2026

American Planning Association
Colorado Chapter

Dear 2026 Award Selection Committee:

I am honored to recommend Noah Niemeyer for the APA Colorado Chapter 2026 Award in the Student category. As a Certified Environmental Professional through the Academy of Board Certified Environmental Professionals, with over 30 years of experience in the environmental field and a history of mentoring numerous student interns, I can confidently say that Noah stands out as one of the most exceptional individuals I have had the privilege to work with. My role Managing the Office of Sustainability and Climate for Larimer County, involves both internal and community facing sustainability programs including the management of the Climate Smart Future Ready initiative under which Noah participated in through an internship. Noah's work with the Larimer County Climate Smart Future Ready (CSFR) initiative—a partnership with Colorado State University—exemplifies his extraordinary abilities and commitment to addressing critical environmental challenges and resulted in a Regional Plans Inventory that we are actively using.

One of the CSFR initiative's priority action areas was evaluating and connecting existing community plans to identify overlapping or gap areas, an originally very broad and overarching scope of work. Noah was the perfect candidate for this work as his career path focus, on understanding how policy relates to "on the ground" land uses and connections between rural and urban communities, was always at the forefront of his approach. His contributions included:

- **Project Design, Research & Analysis**: Developed and carried out a research and data analysis process for conducting a comprehensive review of 48 community plans, many of which were hundreds of pages long.
- **Innovative Problem-Solving and Implementation**: Developing a coding tool that streamlined data analysis and created an accessible, interactive Tableau dashboard.
- **Professional Communication**: Engaging with five subject matter experts to refine the scope of work and presenting findings to the CSFR action team—composed of County department heads—with such enthusiasm and clarity that several team members inquired about his future availability. It is not always easy to communicate between urban and rural focused professionals, but Noah completed this task with the ease and understanding of how policy and plans impact future projects.
- **Insightful Reporting**: Delivering a thoughtful evaluation report that highlighted gaps and opportunities for more interconnected planning, with a strong focus on environmental and sustainability issues.

Noah's work, completed during the Fall 2024 semester, was not only thorough and innovative but also highly impactful. His professionalism, organizational skills, and ability to work independently set him apart. For example, he created shared working documents, initiated check-in meetings, and skillfully guided discussions to ensure alignment and progress. These qualities made him an invaluable member of the team.

Furthermore, Noah's environmental insight brought new perspectives to several County departments, inspiring them to consider sustainability and climate change in ways they had not previously. His work has already begun to influence the way community plans are updated, fostering a more integrated approach that connects environmental issues with areas like transportation, land use, and housing. This contribution has strengthened public policy and implementation efforts across Larimer County and beyond.

Noah's intuitive, innovative, and professional approach makes him a natural leader in environmental policy and sustainability. I am confident that his ongoing work will continue to create meaningful, positive change.

Thank you for considering Noah's application. His exceptional skills, dedication to environmental sustainability and community planning, and ability to inspire others make him an outstanding candidate for this award. I wholeheartedly support this application to recognize him. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or desire additional information.

Sincerely,

Heidi Pruess

Heidi Pruess, CEP
Manager, Office of Sustainability and Climate
Larimer County, Colorado

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LARIMER COUNTY | OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

4872 Endeavor Drive, Suite 150, Johnstown, CO 80534, Larimer.gov

**May 6, 2026**

**APA Colorado**
**Awards Committee**

**Subject:** Support for Noah Niemeyer's APA Colorado Award Nomination

I am writing in support of Noah Niemeyer's nomination for the Student/Recent Graduate Projects award. Through his internship work with Larimer County Noah developed the Regional Plan Inventory, an innovative resource that has provided meaningful value to multiple departments, agencies and partners, including the office I work for – the Larimer County Office of Emergency Management (OEM).

The Regional Plan Inventory serves as a centralized and accessible catalog of plans from across Larimer County. The inventory helps to identify linkages between existing plans as well as strengthen visibility into how separate plans intersect across disciplines and organizations - an increasingly important challenge in resilience, risk reduction and hazard mitigation planning. The inventory is especially valuable because it was developed concurrently with a few other initiatives, allowing the work to actively inform and support parallel planning efforts rather than exist as a standalone academic exercise. Noah's work aligns closely with and helps to inform the update of our Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan, as well as our current Plan Integration for Resilience Scorecard (PIRS) project. By improving awareness of existing plans and identifying areas of overlap and opportunity, the inventory has supported broader efforts to better integrate resilience and risk reduction considerations across departments and planning disciplines.

What stands out most about Noah's work is that he produced a tool with genuine long-term utility and applicability beyond the internship itself. The project demonstrates strong systems thinking, initiative, organization and an understanding of the importance of collaborative planning in addressing complex regional issues. The final product is both practical and forward-looking and reflects a level of professionalism and strategic thinking that is impressive for a student-led effort.

I appreciate the opportunity to support Noah Niemeyer's nomination and believe his work represents an outstanding example of applied planning that delivers meaningful public value.

Sincerely,

Josh Roberts, Mitigation Coordinator
(970) 619-4903 | josh.roberts@larimer.gov

COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY

**College of Liberal Arts**
**Department of Political Science**
1782 Campus Delivery
Fort Collins, CO 80523

American Planning Association
Colorado Chapter

May 11, 2026

Dear 2026 Award Selection Committee,

I write this letter in strong support of Noah Niemeyer's nomination for the APA Colorado Chapter Student Undergraduate Project Award. I have had the privilege of teaching Noah in all the undergraduate courses I teach: POLS 361 US Environmental Politics & Policy, POLS 367: Power, Equity, and Inclusion in Environmental Justice, and POLS 361: Public Administration. Noah was easily among the top students in each course; he consistently distinguished himself as one of the most engaged and academically capable students in the class. Without reservation, I place him among the top five undergraduates I have taught in my career.

Noah's capacity for analytical thinking was evident in my Environmental Justice course, where he produced a case study on the Centralia coal plant transition that stands among the best undergraduate submissions I have read. The assignment asks students to apply environmental justice frameworks to a real-world transition case. Noah did not merely apply the frameworks; he used them to build a genuinely original argument. He drew on David Pellow's critical environmental justice theory, Arnstein's Ladder of Participation, and Gaventa's power cube to simultaneously celebrate the Centralia transition as a meaningful achievement and expose its structural limitations. He was careful to note that the community's racial homogeneity, the unusual goodwill of the plant owner TransAlta, and the presence of insider advocates were enabling conditions unlikely to exist elsewhere. He recognized, persuasively, that future applications of the Centralia model must be designed to compensate for the absence of such advantages. What distinguished this paper was not just its command of the literature but Noah's intellectual criticism: he was willing to address complications within a success story rather than accept it uncritically.

Perhaps the paper most directly relevant to your award was a policy memo Noah wrote in my U.S. Environmental Politics and Policy course addressing the Trump Administration's 2025 proposal to rescind the 2001 Roadless Rule. Addressed to the Secretary of Agriculture, the memo exemplified sophisticated policy and planning analysis. Noah navigated a politically charged issue carefully. He rejected both the administration's call for full rescission and the environmentalist default of no change, instead recommending a targeted amendment that would allow new road construction exclusively for fire mitigation purposes. His argument drew on fire ecology research, USFS fiscal data, and the legal framework of the Multiple-Use Sustained-Yield Act to make the case that full rescission would undermine both conservation values and the administration's own stated policy priorities. The memo was rigorous, balanced, and practically oriented in exactly the way effective natural resource policy work must be.

Noah's work exemplifies the qualities this award is designed to recognize: originality, analytical rigor, and the capacity to produce planning-relevant analysis that carries lessons beyond the immediate case. Both projects described above address real Colorado and western public lands challenges — the just transition of fossil fuel communities and the management of federal roadless areas — and both demonstrate the kind of independent thinking that advances the planning profession. I am confident that Noah will continue to contribute meaningfully to planning practice and scholarship, and I recommend him without reservation

for the APA Colorado Chapter Student Undergraduate Project Award. Please feel free to contact me directly with any questions.

Sincerely,



Dr Kristin Olofsson
Assistant Professor, Environmental Policy
Department of Political Science
Colorado State University
Kristin.Olofsson@colostate.edu